Did Emperor Valerian prohibit Christian assemblies? If so, during what years?

Yes, Emperor Valerian did prohibit Christian assemblies. This prohibition was enacted through his edicts in 257–258 CE.

First Edict (257 CE): In 257 CE, Valerian issued his first rescript that took from Christians the right to hold assemblies or to enter burial places (catacombs). This edict also required Christian clergy to perform sacrifices to Roman gods or face exile. The prohibition specifically forbade assemblies of Christians.[1] [2] [3]

Second Edict (258 CE): A year later, in 258 CE, Valerian intensified his measures with a second, more severe edict that targeted not only clergy but also high-ranking Christians. This edict mandated the execution of bishops, priests, and deacons, and ordered severe punishments for senators, equestrians, and members of the imperial household who refused to renounce their faith.[3] [1]

Duration: The persecution lasted approximately three and a half years, beginning in April 257 CE and continuing until 260 CE, when Valerian was captured by the Persians and his son Gallienus assumed power. Gallienus subsequently issued a rescript in 260 CE that effectively granted Christians toleration, ending the persecution.[4] [1]

The prohibition on assemblies was a central feature of Valerian's anti-Christian policy, reflecting the Roman state's concern that Christian gatherings posed a threat to imperial unity and traditional religious observance.

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